

County Clips



Spotlight On:

Capital Projects

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Message from Supervisor Mitchoff



The new year is always a time of reflection and renewal. As we look back on what we achieved in 2017 and what I hope to accomplish and/or affect in 2018, I'm amazed at the complexity and variety of issues. Patience, pragmatism and a big dose of optimism seem to be the key qualities elected officials must maintain in order to move issues forward.

Let's start with a few major issues the County is facing

WATER

As you know, Contra Costa is one of the five Delta counties that makes up the Delta Counties Coalition. I, along with Supervisor Burgis, continue the ongoing struggle to protect this vital ecosystem while at the same time recognizing a need for a comprehensive water policy for all of California. Through our efforts, we continue to bring the concerns of economic non-viability and environmental harm to the forefront of any discussion we have, whether that be with an editorial board, our supervisorial colleagues in other counties, or most recently with gubernatorial candidates. We beat the drum that WaterFix does not create one more drop of water and that there are many other projects that can be built and which are agreed upon by many of those who do support WaterFix.

With funding mechanisms in peril, and with the help of our congressional delegation asking for an audit of federal funds that were used – which were not supposed to be used – for part of the planning for WaterFix, ongoing doubt about whether the twin tunnels – and now perhaps only one tunnel, which still creates problems – will actually get built continues. But we must remain vigilant. Keep in mind this project doesn't have the funding, yet state leadership continues to move forward in what I consider a reckless manner.

The fight goes on, and you can be assured both Supervisor Burgis and I will lead that fight on behalf of Contra Costa County.

TRANSPORTATION

"There's too much traffic!" Elected officials hear this all the time.

As a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), I am pleased to have worked with my city colleagues, along with Supervisor Glover, to bring innovative and creative solutions to our transportation woes through the adoption of the

Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP). This 30-year plan will apply new technologies and best practices into our transportation strategies to promote a safer, faster, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly methods of getting around our County. A few of the approaches include improvements to: a variety of public transportation; fixing and maintaining local streets and roads; and reducing congestion on major corridors. Most recently, toll lanes were opened on SB 680 Walnut Creek to the Alameda County line.

Through the TEP, I am most proud of the thoughtful attention to ensure accessible transportation for seniors, youth, and people with disabilities. The TEP is supported by each of the cities and towns in Contra Costa. I'd also like to highlight that the strategies for infrastructure are viewed with a lens to build sustainable communities that are walkable and bicycle friendly. These transportation choices move us towards healthier people and a healthier environment.

The County is also working with CCTA to develop a scope and strategy for developing an electric Vehicle Shared Mobility Blueprint. As electric cars transform the motor vehicle industry, it is important to adapt with a ready infrastructure.

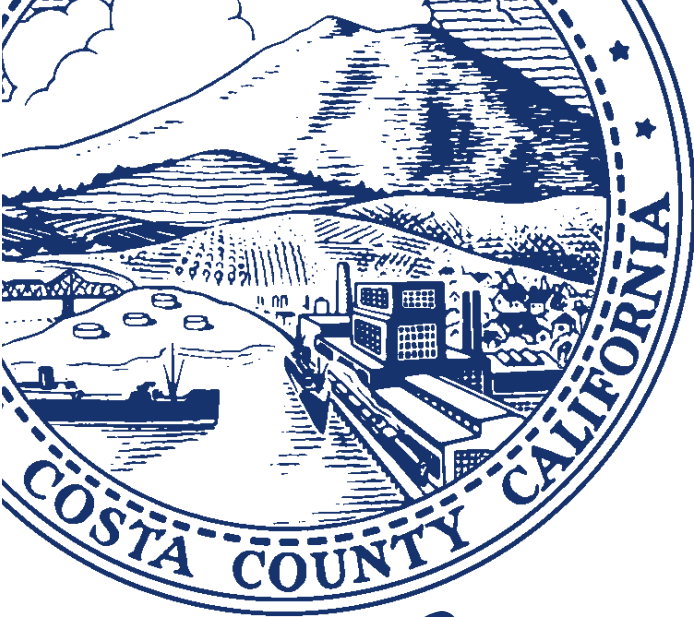
The County and local partners remain innovative and adaptive to the changing needs of our communities, but the reality is that we have many residents who travel to jobs in neighboring counties. In order to truly address the regional challenges faced by the entire Bay Area, we need State and Federal support in accountability and funding.

Looking Ahead

There are other pressing challenges the County must tackle that require a regional approach towards an impactful solution. I encourage you to watch the January 30th Board of Supervisors' Retreat meeting [online](#) and view Dr. Christopher Thornberg's economic forecast for Contra Costa. His remarks touch issues like homelessness, housing, and retirement. As the County faces new challenges this year, the Board of Supervisors' commitment to advocate for the residents of Contra Costa remains as high a priority as ever.

Sincerely,

Karen Mitchoff
Chair, Board of Supervisors



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Recommendations Please

County Clips is your employee newsletter. Please send us your comments, questions & suggestions.

You can contact us at (925) 313-1180 or email us at christine.wampler@contracostatv.org.

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Spotlight On: CAPITAL PROJECTS

County to Replace Aging Buildings

Contra Costa County is set to begin an exciting two year program to build a new Administration Building and a new Public Safety and Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The two new buildings will replace much older buildings that are out-of-date and are suffering from deferred maintenance issues.

The existing Administration Building at 651 Pine Street was finished in the early 1960s and is not up to modern standards for office space. The 12 story tower building has small floor plates, approximately 6,000 square feet, which breaks departments up over multiple floors. In addition, the elevators are older and are hard to maintain, and ask anyone who works in the building, the bathroom situation is less than ideal. Each floor does not have facilities for both men and women, so people often have to change floors to take a rest break.

The need for a new building first surfaced around 30 years ago and several attempts were made to design a new building. The current design will be a four story building, approximately 71,000 square feet, located adjacent to the existing building. The new location is between Escobar and Marina Vista Streets on the site where the County employee parking currently sits. The larger floor plan will allow departments like Human Resources and the County Counsel's Office to have their own floor.



Above: The old County Administration Building dating back to the early 1960s

Left: Architect Renderings of the New Administration Building from different angles.

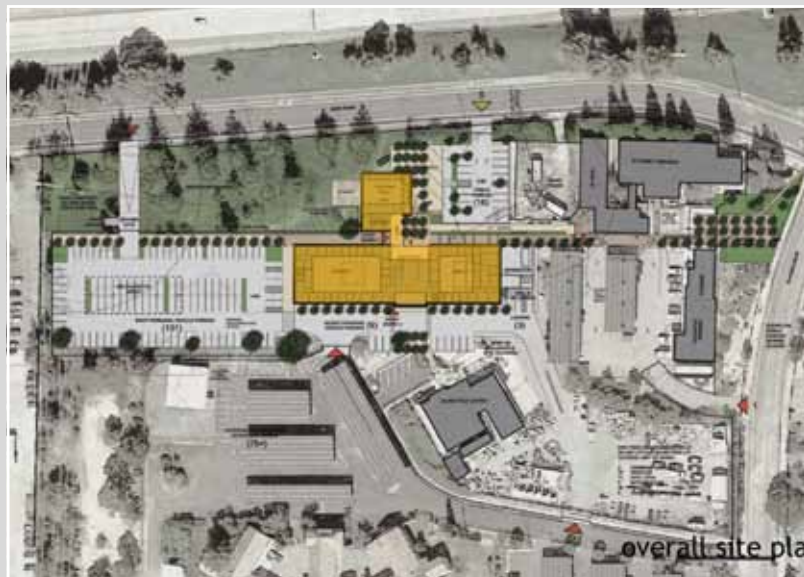


The City of Martinez is happy the new Administration Building is remaining downtown and has been a partner with the County on getting the project moving, helping with utility relocations and other infrastructure issues. The County designed a lower building which is more in scale with the rest of the civic buildings in the City of Martinez and with materials that are compatible with other buildings in the downtown area.

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The first activity, already underway, is the reconstruction of the parking area at the back of 651 Pine Street to accommodate employee parking for the new building. The old crime lab building is being demolished and a new parking lot, with greater capacity, will be constructed between 651 Pine Street and the newly refurbished Morrow House. This new parking lot will have a capacity of around 155 stalls which will accommodate the employees in the new Administration Building. We hope to have approval to install solar arrays in the parking lot very soon. Those solar panels will both shade the cars as well as produce enough electricity to power the new Administration Building when it is finished. As with all construction there will be some changes and inconveniences while the work is going on and this parking disruption is the first. When the 651 Pine Street parking lot closed, sometime in mid to late March, the employees who parked there were temporarily relocated to nearby parking areas. The schedule is to complete the parking lot by July of this year.



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The Official Groundbreaking Ceremony took place January 8th, 2018

Watch the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new County Administration Building, (EOC) and dedication of the renovated Morrow House online at [Groundbreaking Ceremony](#).



Board of Supervisors utilize their shovels in the Groundbreaking Ceremony.

The new EOC and Public Safety Building will be constructed to the west of the existing EOC near the intersection of Glacier and Muir Roads off Highway 4. The building will house the EOC staff on one side and the Sheriff's Department Administration and other sections on the other side. The current EOC is housed in a building that was originally a maintenance facility for



Architect renderings of the New Emergency Operations Center (EOC) top and middle, and of the New Administration Building below.

Fleet Operations and its layout is not ideal for sustained emergency operations. The new facility, designed and built to be an EOC, will make for a much more pleasant environment for those occupying it, whether for a day of training or an actual 12 hour shift in a real activation. The Sheriff's Public Safety building will also include a lecture hall that can be opened to the outside, for training and ceremonial events. It can become extra space in the event of an EOC activation for staging of equipment or volunteer staff.

The County is finishing the selection process for a Design Build team to construct both facilities. Once selected and approved by the Board of Supervisors that team will begin construction, with major activity starting around June of this year, to have both buildings finished in the first quarter of 2020.

In two years the County will have two new, modern buildings to replace aging structures. Both buildings will be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standards. The LEED rating system is designed by the United States Green Building Council to evaluate the energy efficiency and other environmental and sustainable factors in a building's design and construction. The County guideline is a LEED Silver rating and both of these buildings will exceed that guideline. The County is also trying to make both facilities zero net energy, which means that the amount of energy used by the buildings each year is offset by the amount of energy generated on site. We won't know for sure about this rating until the buildings are occupied and we can track the actual energy used and the actual energy generated from the solar arrays at each site, but we are designing the project to achieve this designation.



Couples Celebrate Special Day with “Destination Wedding”



Valentine's Day 2018

at the Clerk-Recorder's Office

For Ali Estrada and Hank Osuna, Valentine's Day presented the right time to finally take the plunge and get married. Well, it wasn't just because it was the most romantic day of the year. The prospect of getting married at the beautiful John Muir Historic Site sealed the deal. “We have been on the fence for the past 7, almost 8 years and decided this was a good time, a good place to do it,” Estrada said.

The Walnut Creek couple, along with 13 others, tied the knot at the scenic John Muir House. The Contra Costa Clerk-Recorder Office offered weddings at the historical site for the first time. “It was a beautiful venue to conduct ceremonies and the couples were very appreciative,” Assistant Clerk-Recorder Barbara Dunmore said.

The “Destination Wedding” idea proved to be a hit, as participants raved about sharing their nuptials inside the elegant Victorian-style living room of the legendary naturalist who called Contra Costa County home. The County partnered with the National Park Service in hosting the event. Look for Valentine's Day weddings at the John Muir House to become a yearly tradition.

It was evident that Osuna and Estrada and their family and friends enjoyed the experience. Everyone sang: “Going to the chapel and I'm going to get married,” as the couple exited a cart that escorted them from the visitor center to the home.

Couples from Contra Costa County and beyond opted to have their weddings at the site; one couple who plans to move to the County came from Nova Scotia to tie the knot.

In addition to the ceremonies at the John Muir House, Valentine's Day was plenty busy a few miles away at the Clerk-Recorder's Office. There were 12 ceremonies at the office on Valentine's Day, which is generally the busiest day of the year.

The Clerk-Recorder's Office plans to have “Destination Weddings” on a quarterly basis at unique, picturesque locations throughout Contra Costa County.



Taking a Bite out of Voter Accessibility Needs

Imagine making your way to your neighborhood polling place on Election Day only to find that you are not able to get into your polling place to vote. This is a scenario that the Contra Costa Elections never wants to see happen. Ever.

To make sure all residents, particularly those with disabilities, can exercise their right to vote, the Elections Division created a new class for its volunteer poll workers this spring that focuses specifically on making and keeping polling places accessible on Election Day.

can be one of those things you don't think about if you don't see it, so we try to put them in the shoes of somebody who might have a challenge of any kind." A section of the course includes the use of the new ballot marking devices at polling places, how assistance should be offered and an exercise where poll workers have to identify potential issues.

"There are a lot of 'Ah ha' moments, where people see that a lot of people may have common challenges they never thought about. It's a real eye opener," said Camille Cain, one of the Elections Division staff members who developed and teaches the course. Adds fellow instructor Chris Juell: "Accessibility is not just for the people who need it, it's for everybody."

Poll workers lauded the new class, saying it has opened their eyes to the importance of identifying barriers and mitigating them to create accessibility. "This class made me aware of some information I had never considered," poll worker Emily C. said. "Mitigation tools are simple, but it's a matter of actually using them."

Poll workers receive this specific training because they are the ones who are in the communities on Election Day and implement the County's plans for accessible polling places. Thus far, 599 poll workers have taken the course, which have been held at locations throughout the County. The Elections Division goal is to have at least two poll workers at each of the County's polling places attend the APPLE class before the June election.

The class is offered on a year-round basis. For more information, go to the Contra Costa Elections website at www.cocovote.us.

The Accessible Polling Place Locations and Equipment, or APPLE, classes include lessons on how sites are surveyed for compliance with federal accessibility standards, on how to use items such as ramps and signs to make polling places accessible and how to create a welcoming environment for all voters.

"We try to put it into context and try to relate it to the poll workers with personal experiences, to challenge them to look at things differently," said Jose Gonzalez, the Elections Processing Supervisor who oversees poll workers. "(Accessibility needs)



Elections staff member Chris Juell teaches an APPLE course at the Contra Costa Elections office in mid-February.

The Time To Prevent Yellowjackets Is Now



Be Proactive in 2018 After a Record-Setting 2017

In 2017, the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District received a record-breaking 1,352 requests for ground-nesting yellowjacket inspections — up 142% compared to the average number of requests the District received during each year of California's recent five-year drought.

So that 2018 isn't another banner year for yellowjackets, now is the time to prevent them by hanging up yellowjacket traps. Yellowjacket traps are an effective way to reduce the population of yellowjackets on your property, and if you hang traps up now, you might even catch the yellowjacket queen, preventing her from starting a new nest. Here's how:

- Find reusable yellowjacket traps at many home and garden stores.
- Hang traps high in trees at the edge of your property and as far away from where people or pets live and play.
- Using fruit juices in the traps at this time of year may attract queens.
- Also, use the pheromone insert that is sold to attract the worker yellowjackets because it mimics their own hormones and attracts them to the traps.

Ground-nesting yellowjackets are a risk to public health because when someone walks or uses equipment on the ground, the vibration can be felt in the underground nest causing yellowjackets to emerge – biting and stinging repeatedly as their first line of defense. That is why the first thing to do if you see yellowjackets coming out of a hole in the ground or out from under a bush on your property is:

- Place a flag, tool or any other handy item on the ground relatively near the nest to [mark the nest for inspection](#) and then get to a safe location.
- Once you are safely away from the yellowjackets, draw a simple map to show the layout of your yard and where the nest is located.
- Tape the map to your front door or gate.
- [Call the District](#) or [go online](#) to request ground-nesting yellowjacket service.

For more information [the District's free service to treat ground-nesting yellowjacket nests](#), visit the [District's website](#).

Election Preview

Watch all the Candidates for Local Office on CCTV

The Contra Costa Elections Division and Contra Costa Television (CCTV) are once again partnering with local chapters of the League of Women Voters to broadcast a set of forums to help voters be informed as they cast their ballot in June.

The "Election Preview" programming will be available starting in early May on local CCTV channels and the Contra Costa Television YouTube page https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD1z6XC8_fqZXP3Hayl-kQA.

For the first time, current and former Bay Area television news professionals will moderate the Election Preview programming.

The races that will be televised include all contested County Board of Supervisor seats and contested County Elections, including the Superintendent of the County Office of Education, and all State Assembly districts.



Contra Costa County Cares Holiday Food Fight

You Can Help End Hunger

“In 2002, when my former boss, Laura Lockwood, and I began this drive it was initially conceived to collect non-perishable items for the Food Bank. The challenge was confined to 651 Pine Street, and right from the start Kathy Gleason encouraged us to collect funds as well” said Food Fight Coordinator and Executive Assistant of LAFCO, Kate Sibley. During the drive employees stepped up to the challenge of providing 15 pounds of food each, and over 3 tons of food were sent to the Food Bank, along with a couple of thousand dollars. The following year the challenge expanded to include employees in all County departments, and the process shifted from collecting food to collecting funds. “We collected almost 36,000 pounds and well over \$29,000 during that drive and were able to demonstrate the advantage of collecting funds rather than food on many levels,” Said Sibley.

In 2003, Laura Lockwood, Kathy Gleason and Kate Sibley decided to enter into competition with Solano County. Solano accepted the challenge, and in 2004 the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight was formed. Sibley said, “I don’t know that I had any long-term goal in mind when we began this annual drive. In fact, I don’t think we even thought of it as an “annual” idea for the first two years. It just evolved on its own into something that we couldn’t stop, since the need was (and continues to be) so great. Additionally, it was clear that there was a collective energy among Contra Costa County employees to take this on.”

During the past 15 years, Contra Costa and Solano County employees have raised over 1.7 million dollars in the Food Fight competition. These funds have helped provide millions of pounds of food to people in need, most of the food being fresh produce. The money raised by Contra Costa and Solano County employees helps feed hardworking families who struggle daily to put food on the table for their children.



“Without the help we receive, I have no idea how I’d make all of our lunches every day,” says Kim, wife and mom of two.

Larry Sly, Executive Director of the Food Bank said the friendly completion clearly is needed every year. Our hope is to continue the competition and grow the annual Food Fight. We also want to continue our partnerships with County departments (EHSD, Public Health, Environmental Health and more) in areas where we can collaborate to help low-income people in our community. Working together we can make an even greater impact in the lives of our neighbors.”

Counties Care has energized hundreds of County employees throughout the years to organize, fundraise, donate raffle items and drop money into mini barrels to mention a few. Sibley said County employees have been very creative throughout the years in raising money for the Food Bank and she hopes the vision continues, “To this day, my favorite event was in Building Inspection back in 2005. They lined the 12th floor former cafeteria with plastic sheeting, and all of the managers and the department heads lined-up against the wall so that employees could throw whipped cream pies at them (for a certain donation, of course). They raised a lot of money.”

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Contra Costa County Cares Holiday Food Fight

Food Bank Continued from page 10

Each year various awards are given, including the Big Apple. The county that contributes the most monies per employee throughout the fundraiser gets it, this year Solano won. “The Big Apple came from the 2003 drive. An apple farmer in East County, in District III, brought 18,952 pounds of apples to the Food Bank and informed them that he was donating as a result of the County employees’ drive. Thus, the Big Apple trophy was created that year to celebrate such a magnificent donation—and an apple theme continued in the Holiday Food Fight for many years, although in later years we began to branch out to vegetables and other icons.”

More than 180,000 people from both Contra Costa and Solano Counties have benefitted from this friendly competition since its inception. Where 2 out of 3 of those people have to choose between

paying for food or rent; 26 % of households served include military veterans; 1 out of 4 is a child. Gleason, reminds everyone that every dollar raised or donated is worth two healthy meals and over 60% of the food distributed by the Food Bank is fresh produce. “This is the only County employee to County employee fundraising competition

to benefit a food bank in the Country that we are aware of. Our goal is to add an online component enabling County employees to not only compete with each other, but to also set-up their own fundraising page to encourage others to get involved and donate.”

Contra Costa and Solano have raised \$1,327, 341.51 combined since 2004. This year Solano County raised \$45,252.20 and Contra Costa County raised \$102,884.78.

There have been many food fighters who have labored year after year to make Contra Costa Cares a success. However, some have insured the vision has been kept alive said Sibley. “Laura Lockwood, the then Capital Facilities Director for Contra Costa County when we began this drive; she went on to work in the Oregon State Treasurer’s office in 2004. Kathy Gleason, a woman with more compassion in her fingertips than most people can muster altogether, who gently persuaded me to dig ever deeper into the Food Fight, and who raised my consciousness regarding those who are less fortunate than me. Lori Braunesreither, who competes with Kathy Gleason for that assessment; she has been with the Food Fight since the beginning and has been one of the most creative individuals all along the way and Nancy Yee, who ensured that the CAO would support whatever was needed.”



Above: Kate Sibley addresses the Board of Supervisors



Left: Board Members with Kate Sibley, Larry Sly of the Food Bank and all of the County team members

Kate Sibley has been a County employee since 2002 and since then has helped grow the Food Fight. This year she will be retiring and said the journey of working with the Food Bank and County employees has left a lasting impact on her life. “Looking back over these years, it is almost impossible to tell you how much this has meant to me. I’ve been educated about so many things—not just the Food Bank and the needs of those less fortunate, but all the County departments. I have a better picture than most people about what amazing people they are and what awesome work they do for the residents of our County. I’ve made friendships that I hope will be forever. I’ve participated in something that is unique: the Food Bank has never found any other effort like this anywhere else in this Country.”

If you would like to give and/or need more information, please visit Counties Care Holiday Food Fight at <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/5459/Holiday-Food-Fight-Challenge>.

Annual Homeless Count

Contra Costa County's Homeless Services teamed-up with multiple agencies to conduct the Annual Homeless Count on January 24th. Director of Health, Housing and Homeless Services, Lavonna Martin, said this annual undertaking helps show the number of homeless individuals that are finding and retaining permanent housing. Ms. Martin added that, "Accuracy in this count is very important; we want to start thinking about appropriate interventions and we need to understand the scale and scope needed to design those interventions. Therefore, getting an accurate count each and every year is critical in our system of care."

Robert Ramirez, who has found himself homeless for the last year and a half after the tragic loss of his son five years ago, said the County's effort has helped, but with daily challenges and many dying from exposure it gets tough on the streets. Mr. Ramirez said, "Trying to get back on your feet after something like that is pretty difficult. You don't have all your faculties straight. People catch on to that and they are not very sympathetic to anything you might be dealing with."

Senator Steve Glazer, who participated in the County point-in-time count and interacted with some of the homeless individuals said that this experience helps him understand homelessness in our community. "We all have a different perception of the homeless problem and what is so important about this annual count is getting the real facts. Who are they? How many? What are their circumstances? Because that is the foundation of knowledge that allows us as law makers to make good choices on how we could help so many of our friends and neighbors that are in need."

The point-in-time count was conducted by approximately 100 volunteers, including 50 County employees and community partners doing surveys. Service locations included soup kitchens, benefit offices, community college campuses, etc. The Coordinated Outreach Referral Engagement (CORE) program visited more than 100 encampments during the survey period. CORE Director Michael Callanan said the main goal is to meet all the clients where they are at, build relationships and trust with them, so they can bring them back into society. "This includes medical, mental health, drug addiction, detox programs, care centers, warming centers, shelters, dental clinics, churches and job opportunities. The more we have to offer them and build-up their confidence, the more effective we can be in helping them get back into society."



Above: Jeffrey and his dog camping under an overpass.



Middle: Jeffrey speaking with Senator Glazer about homelessness.



Below: Homeless Count Team approaches a homeless encampment.

Homeless Status Continued from page 12

For some CORE Workers situations of homelessness hit close to home, because they have walked this road at some point in their lives. Since December 2016, Erin Lyons, has been working with CORE and feels the need to pay forward all the help he once received. Mr. Lyons said, "I myself was homeless at one point-in-time. I was homeless while I was working at the homeless shelter so I was able to relate to a lot of the clients. I understand a lot of what they are going through. For someone to reach a hand out and give me a hand-up, I feel it is only my duty to do the same for someone else. So, it feels really good to be out here. It's a very emotional job. I definitely have my ups and downs but for the most part, it is probably the most rewarding thing I have ever done."

CORE outreach worker Dori Rudrin also said she feels the need to pay it forward. Ms. Rudrin said, "I give back because I have been in situations where I have had to bring myself up from being broken down and to be able to be of service to other people and help them get on their way, it fills my heart and makes me feel good at the end of the day." Rudrin reminds us that we can all find ourselves in this situation. "I feel anybody can be in this situation. It could be in the blink of an eye that you lose everything and end up homeless. So, when you look at a homeless person, don't look down on them. Help them with resources and give them a hand-up."

Director Lavonna Martin said the numbers of homeless residents in our community have remained pretty steady for the last couple of years. This reveals that services and programs are working to manage the problem. However, the point-in-time count continues to be crucial every year to understand appropriate interventions and ways to transition more individuals out of homelessness. Ms. Martin said, "What we are really interested in is, how do we address the problem and reduce the number of individuals who are experiencing homelessness in our community. Therefore, every single year we need to understand how those numbers are changing, how is the population shifting, so we can come-up with additional interventions."

Martin said there are many ways you can lend a helping hand. "One of the ways is joining with us to partner and help us conduct surveys so we are getting an accurate count.



Above: Michael who is homeless right now, receives a care package from County Outreach staff.



Left: County staff, Dori Rudrin and Karl Fisher confer during the homeless count.

Another way to get involved is to take a look at donating to our housing security fund, which is hosted by our Contra Costa Regional Foundation and that allows individuals to regain housing quickly. We can provide assistance by helping individuals with the necessary security deposit and move-in costs, that will essentially end their homelessness."

For more information about Contra Costa County's Homeless Services you can visit cchealth.org/h3 or the page for the County's [Council on Homelessness](#). Information about the point-in-time count, along with the past three annual reports, is available [here](#).



40th

Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,

Commemoration



County employees and area residents gathered on Tuesday, January 16, to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was Contra Costa County's 40th annual MLK Day commemoration, and featured inspired performances from Contra Costa School Performance Arts "Spoken Word" and entertainment from Oakland Interfaith Choir.

Welcome and Introductions were addressed by MLK Committee Chair Sharon Hymes-Offord and District 1 Supervisor John Gioia hosted the event in the absence of Board Chair, Supervisor Karen Mitchoff. The program featured a keynote address by 2008 MLK Humanitarian Award Honoree and Reverend Charles D. Tinsley. A highlight of each year's ceremony is the presentation of Humanitarian and Student Humanitarian of the Year honors to two local residents. County resident and community activist for more than 25 years, Phil Arnold was selected as Humanitarian of the Year. Mr. Arnold is a US Veteran and retired software industry executive but more important to him is being a husband of 46 years, father to three, and grandfather to six.



Above: The Oakland Interfaith Choir performs.

Left: The Reverend Charles D. Tinsley gives his keynote address.



Below: Student Humanitarian of the Year, Sienna Terry, poses for a photo with her proud parents.

Our student winner was Las Lomas High School Senior Sienna Terry, who has transformed from a bullied teen into a leader. Her story encouraged administration to initiate an Equity Summit. Along with her friends they established "Care Week" at Las Lomas in November 2017. A Latino Unidos club started and thriving at the school. She is a former intern at the United States House of Representative and was elected as governor for the California Girls State Alumnae Foundation.

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40th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Commemoration

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For the third year in a row, the event displayed “My Dream Is...” wall outside the Board of Supervisors Chamber where people posted their own thoughts in a collage of inspiring messages. Now, it is your turn, share your plans with us! Participate by visiting the “Share Your Dream” of Contra Costa County Dr. Martin Luther King site. <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/6013/Share-Your-Dream> Let’s make Contra Costa a hub of activity in 2018 sharing our dreams in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The event was rounded out by another incredible lunch buffet and this year long time caterer Velma Braggs was recognized for her dedication and service to the event. County employees are welcome to submit their own nominations for adult and student Humanitarians of the Year. We invite you to watch prior ceremonies, including keynote addresses, entertainment and recognition of our Humanitarian and Student Humanitarian of the Year honorees. <http://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5307/Dr-Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Ceremony>

A special thanks goes out to the following sponsors of the celebration: the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors; the MLK Committee members; the County Administrator’s Office; the Probation Department; the Public Works Department; the Human Resources Department; the Martinez Police Department; Contra Costa Television (CCTV); the Employment and Human Services Department; and the Community Services Bureau Head Start Central Kitchen. Thank you for joining us in the 40th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration.

Top: Contra Costa School Performance Arts students perform “Spoken Word.”

Middle: Student Humanitarian of the Year, Sienna Terry, with the Board of Supervisors.

Middle: Adult Humanitarian of the Year, Phil Arnold, with the Board of Supervisors.

Bottom: Caterer Velma Braggs receives a certificate of recognition from the Board for her many years of service to the Annual MLK Commemoration event.





Project Second Chance

Project Second Chance (PSC) has ignited confidence and courage for the last 33 years to more than 5,800 county residents in learning how to read, write and spell better. The Contra Costa County Library's Adult Literacy Program offers free, confidential, one-on-one literacy instruction to adults who struggle with basic reading, writing and spelling.

"Don't ever be afraid to ask for help, especially if someone is going to give it to you for free!" said 61-year-old PSC student Bernard, who started with a PSC tutor last March. Bernard was diagnosed with dyslexia in junior high school. He graduated high school, but struggles with reading and can get easily frustrated. He often uses his phone as a Dictaphone for help writing. He worked for a few years as a carpenter before becoming a longshoreman. And as he awaits his first grandson, he is committed to conquering his fear of reading and writing. "My son-in-law and I are going to buy a car for my grandson and I want to learn how to read so I can help him build the car," said Bernard.

Like Bernard, 55-year-old Consuelo has also conquered her fear of reading and writing. Many times she felt embarrassed when she dropped her two sons off at school and could not communicate with their teachers. "I was cleaning houses because that was the only job I could perform," said Consuelo. "One of my clients talked to me about this program." Consuelo grew up in rural Mexico, where she finished 9th grade. She came to PSC when she set a goal of improving her literacy skills so she could get a better job. She wrapped-up her tutoring a couple of years ago after first working with a tutor for several years on general reading and writing skills, then studying for and passing the GED test. "I am so thankful for the Project Second Chance Program. My life is so different now. It gave me hope and now I want to continue learning," said Consuelo. Since obtaining her GED, Consuelo has been promoted to a supervisor position at a school and has enrolled at Diablo Valley Community College with her two sons. "My children are so happy and thankful I have my GED certificate," said Consuelo. They tell her, "Mom, I am so proud of you for continuing with your education."

Adult Literacy Program Manager, Laura Seaholm, said PSC is perhaps more relevant today than when their doors opened 33 years ago. "We want to reach every resident of Contra Costa County who struggles with basic reading and writing skills. We are here to help them achieve their personal literacy-related goals and empower them in their work and personal lives," said Seaholm.

For more information about Project Second Chance, please visit www.ccclib.org/psc.



Top: PSC Administrators Kate Marshall and Lauren Seaholm.

Middle: PSC volunteer tutor working with PSC student Bernard.

Left: PSC graduate and former student, Consuelo.



lynda.com *with your Library Card*

The Contra Costa County Library has an exciting new opportunity for County employees, as well as County residents with Library cards.

The library now offers library cardholders access to Lynda.com. It's a website with more than 3,000 courses and more than 130,000 videos from web design, education and media production to business. It typically costs at least \$19.99 a month to subscribe to the site, but cardholders can get all of Lynda's content for free. You can log on from anywhere. All

you need is a library card. And you do not have to be a resident of Contra Costa County to get a library card.

"It's good to offer folks the opportunity to use the library's services without necessarily being in the building," said County Librarian Melinda Cervantes. "We want to offer these kinds of educational opportunities so patrons can use them on their own time and at their own pace."

Patrons can get to Lynda.com by logging in through the library's website with their library card and pin numbers. After creating an account - which only requires a name and e-mail address - users are set. They can watch any videos, create playlists, download course files and bookmark pages. Once signed up, library members can get access to Lynda at the library, on their desktop computers or on their mobile devices. The only caveat is that they must use a web browser, not the Lynda app.

To get free Lynda.com access or sign up for a library card, visit any of the 26 library branches across the County or go to www.ccclib.org.

Adventure awaits with Contra Costa County Library's Summer Reading program. This year "Reading Takes You Everywhere" is the theme and runs from June 4 to August 4. Readers of all ages can visit ccclib.org/summer for activities and challenges to feed the imagination and explore new skills. Visit any of the 26 Contra Costa County library locations for free and fun happenings all summer. Every completed book is eligible for a free book and a raffle entry to win prizes.



Earn and Learn East Bay

Earn & Learn (E & L) East Bay, hosted by the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board and the Contra Costa Economic Partnership, coordinates and supports a work-based learning system for: school districts; community colleges; workforce development boards; community-based organizations; and businesses. They have developed and are providing an evidence-based, coordinated and work-based learning system that increases and enhances experiences for youth. E & L Director, Gina Del Carlo, explains, “The center of this work is collaboration. The program offers strong support to educators, providing an easy, strategic process for employers, as well as, sometimes life changing experiences for young people.”

E & L East Bay Operations Manager, Carmen Perkins, the professional liaison for the more than 60 connectors across Contra Costa and Alameda Counties said E & L has over 2,500 employers in the system and over 3,000 employees in the system. Ms. Perkins said, “E & L East Bay provides coordination for how opportunities are shared among the region, a way to capture all of the data and show the impact that it is having on students.” Perkins adds that, “The



whole purpose is to create an equitable system. That way, employers are having contact with several schools not just one. We are learning best practices from the schools

that are succeeding, while sharing information with those schools that are struggling or just beginning to utilize the work-based learning program.”

Thousands of youth in Contra Costa County have benefited from E & L East Bay and its employer engagement campaign, which launched in 2015. One of the many success stories is that of Derrick Thomas. Raised by a single mother, Derrick and his eight siblings had many obstacles to overcome. One that clearly stands out in his mind is when he lost his uncle and father figure at a young age. “My dad is in my life now, but he wasn’t in my life when I was a little kid, so there was a time where I felt my dad didn’t want me, so why would anyone else want me. My uncle showed me he wanted me in his life, he called me his “favorite



Above: Derrick and Ashely each give a presentation to Fire District staff at a meeting.

Left: Ashely practices using the “Jaws of Life” on a wrecked auto.

Lower Left: Another student works in an office setting.

nephew” and he was there for me. So when I lost him in 7th grade, it pushed me to keep going, to make it for him,” explained Derrick.

Through guidance from Truancy, Foster/Homeless Youth Liaison at John Swett High School, John Angell, Derrick was connected to the summer opportunities of E & L East Bay. “All the kids that are in the E & L program will find out whether they want to do this job for the rest of their lives or not.” He adds that high school students not only need exposure to great opportunities, but role models that show the students their value.

When Derrick was given the E & L program information and was motivated by his father to apply, he did not waste time and told his school liaison John Angell and his mom of his plans. “I told them I would be interested in trying the Fire Service. My mom told me it would be a good opportunity, but I never thought I could do it because of the aspect of seeing people at their worst and being around fire. I thought that it would be something hard and something I wouldn’t like,” said Derrick. It has been the mentorship and guidance from the Crockett-Carquinez Fire House staff that taught Derrick the ropes, changed his outlook on life and encouraged him to keep fighting for his dreams; eventually helping him to land a job with the Fire Department. “In my senior year I was lost; I wasn’t the greatest kid out there. I missed a lot of school.

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I was just trying to figure myself out and the guys at the Crockett-Carquinez Fire House helped me figure things out and do the internship,” said Derrick. “They encouraged me to take my EMT, to take fire science classes, and to try to get hired at a

pay department.” Derrick hopes everyone takes advantage of the opportunities offered to them through E & L East Bay.

Like Derrick, Ashley Farrell didn’t always know what she wanted to be. Ashley’s inspirations are her grandparents, her sister and her four-year-old twin nephew and niece. She was raised by her grandparents and says that her parents might not have made the best decisions, but that didn’t discourage her and should not discourage anyone when overcoming difficult situations. “Honestly, I believe life is what you make of it, you are not dealt a bad situation, you are just dealt a situation and it is up to you how you want to deal with it,” Ashley shared. With support from her grandparents and guidance from academic counselor John Angell, Ashley was also connected with the E & L program and says she found her purpose working with the Fire District. “It was definitely quite an experience, but I really enjoyed it and it gave me direction. I thought I was going to be a physiology major, and was trying to find something to do within that field, but now I’ve finally found something that I absolutely love,” Ashley said. Ashley shared that many of her friends see all of her adventures on social media and she hopes it encourages many of them to participate. “That’s why I think internships are the best, because you get a little taste of what it is like to be in that career, without the full commitment.” Ashley is currently enrolled at Contra Costa Community College taking her EMT training and is a senior at John Swett High School.

Making dreams a reality for Derrick and Ashley and other youth is made possible through annual donations by employers and funders that partner with E & L East Bay, like Philipps 66 who has been a champion of E & L since its inception. Public Affairs Manager Paul Adler said Philipps 66 is all about safety, honor and commitment. He adds that E & L provides those same values to the youth through these employment opportunities.

Contra Costa County Office of Education Youth Development Services Supervisor, Denise Clarke, said it takes commitment from both the students and school staff to make these opportunities a reality. “Derrick definitely found a pathway and without these experiences for the youth I just don’t know how they would

Earn & Learn Continued from page 19

necessarily make that leap from high school to the training or internships that help start their careers.” Clarke is also happy for Ashley, saying “she is going to be leaps and bounds ahead of everybody, as well as being a female in the field, I think she will be highly coveted.” Clarke hopes all students in Contra Costa County take advantage of opportunities like these. “I would just say be aware of what is available through your school, through your community, through the County office, through E & L East Bay. Even if it is not a direct link to your career, take the opportunities that might present themselves to you,” Clark encouraged.

These experiences also apply to college students. Workforce Development Community Partnership Liaison for Los Medanos College, Tara Dale Sanders, said being part of the network has allowed her to work more closely with other organizations, with other connectors and with other employers that are engaging with E & L East Bay. “What E & L has done is give employers one place to go, one website where they can pledge how they would like to interact with the schools. When an employer would like to host students for a tour or offer summer jobs or internships, they go to the E & L East Bay website, they pledge that activity which then goes to our sales force tracker,” said Tara.



Mt. Diablo Unified School District Administrator for Career Pathways, Heather Fontanilla, also shares the benefits the E & L program has provided to their student body. “We either have to bring the students outside the classroom or bring the real world into the classroom. What E & L East Bay has allowed us to do is to create a platform that links the business partners to our educators and within our school district we set-up a system of support through work-based learning coordinators. We are able to go to the classrooms ahead of a guest speaker or mentorship opportunity to work with the students so that they are prepared to participate,” said Heather.

For more information please visit: www.earnlearneastbay.org or Contact E & L East Bay Program Director Gina Del Carlo at (925) 602-6807.

25th Annual Cesar Chavez Celebration



The 25th Annual Cesar E. Chavez Celebration started with rousing mariachi music as Mariachi Monumental entered the Board chambers. The Mistress of Ceremonies, Melinda Cervantes, County Librarian and Chair of the Cesar Chavez Celebration Committee, introduced the Board of Supervisor members in attendance. Next, Karen Mitchoff, Chair, Board of Supervisors thanked the representatives from the offices of state and federal elected officials for attending the celebration. Supervisor Mitchoff provided her opening remarks and welcomed those in attendance at this annual celebration and then Mariachi Monumental was introduced to provide more musical entertainment.



Larry Sly, Executive Director of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties, was the keynote speaker. Mr. Sly provided a brief synopsis of his life and how he lived through and watched the impact that Cesar Chavez had on the rights of agricultural workers and on social justice in general. Mr. Sly stated that the role of the Food Bank, though less significant than what Cesar Chavez accomplished, definitely plays a role in strengthening and nourishing the community – this year's theme. The Food Bank has grown from distributing 36,000 pounds of food in its first year of operation to over 20 million pounds of food last year. And, 1 in 8 residents in Contra Costa and Solano Counties are served by the Food Bank each year. Mr. Sly pointed out that there have been great strides in social justice, but there is still much work to be done.



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Cesar Chavez Celebration

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There was additional dancing entertainment provided by the Ballet Folklorico Netzahualcoyotl. Then the Board of Supervisors presented awards to the 2018 Youth Hall of Fame Honorees. The Honorees were the following: Mackinsey (Kinsey) Mascali, Good Samaritan, 12th grade, San Ramon Valley High School; Ryan Saechao, Volunteerism, 10th grade, Richmond High School; Cei-Lai Fong, Teamwork, 12th grade, San Ramon Valley High School; Evan Chen, Creativity, 11th grade, Campolindo High School; and Ashley Koehler, Perseverance, 7th grade, Antioch Middle School.



The Cesar Chavez Celebration Committee would like to thank the following sponsors who made this annual event possible: the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors; the Contra Costa Health Services Department; the Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department; the Contra Costa Public Works Department; IBEW Local Union 302; Local 152 Carpenters; and Laborers International Union Local 324. Others acknowledged were the following: the County Administrator's Office; the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County (AC5); catering by Los Panchos Restaurant; display by Raymond Martinez; flowers by Gracie Lerma, Public Defender's Office; Public Works Print & Mail, Vien Tran; visual support services, Contra Costa Television (CCTV); set-up by Rey Torralba, Clerk-Recorder-Elections Office; and photography by David Fraser, Supervisor Federal Glover's Office.

Drone Mapping

Helping to Eradicate Invasive Plants

On Saturday, February 10, Contra Costa County Public Works, in collaboration with Diablo Valley College (DVC), conducted a test flight of a drone to map sections of San Ramon Creek along Hap Magee Park in the Alamo/Danville area. The initial test flight was to determine if the photos from the flight could be used to detect where arundo is growing, with the goal of removing arundo from the watershed. Arundo, also called giant reed or giant cane, is an invasive non-native plant which displaces native plants, destroys fish and wildlife habitat and is a fire and flood hazard.

Mike Quinn and Jeffery Millar from DVC conducted the flight, downloaded the data and will make a map (or terrain model) of the area for Public Work's use. They will also be using this information for their students to develop a map of arundo stands in this section of the park.

Public Works staff worked with Friends of San Ramon Creek to send letters to 27 neighbors to alert them to the possibility of the drone flying overhead. The response was positive to our collaborative efforts to work on arundo mapping and eradication.

The premier flight path included the southern end of Hap Magee Park north to Lewis Lane, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the creek length. The drone flew at an elevation of 315 feet above ground level, so its buzz was not even audible. As the drone flew back and forth across a nominal 50 foot band on either side of the creek, four pictures were taken with each pass, giving overlap across the width of the path.

Reference points were taken at four points along the creek to further enhance the GPS coordinates recorded with each shot.



Above: A stand of invasive Arundo is shown.



Left: Public Works staff and DVC students prepare to fly the drone and make a map.

Below: The drone takes flight.



The entire flight path was pre-programmed, so that the flight was autonomously controlled, with the pilot able to intervene if necessary. Total flight time for the drone was approximately seven minutes.

DVC will take the pictures and data, analyze it and get back to Public Works with their findings. Public Works looks forward to continued collaboration with DVC to ensure we steward the environment throughout Contra Costa County for future generations.



Work Experience Program for Youthful Offenders

Helping to Prepare for Re-entry Employment

In an effort to bridge rehabilitative services with vocational trades and enhance an at-risk youth's ability to successfully transition into the community with marketable skills, the John A. Davis Juvenile Hall is currently operating a Work Experience program for youth who have graduated High School. The on-site Work Experience program draws youth from the facility's Youthful Offender Treatment Program (YOTP).

Lead by two dedicated retired Juvenile Institution Officers, Carlos Mendoza and Joe Velez, the youth in the Work Experience program complete projects in the areas of landscaping and construction. Both Juvenile Institution Officers assigned to the program are skilled in these areas. As such, Juvenile Institution Officers Mendoza and Velez believe they are able to provide youth with valuable skills which can serve as seeds for future employment. In turn, these acquired skills can ultimately contribute an array of opportunities for the youth once they return to the community. Staff members from the Contra Costa County Public Works Department shared the same thought as they committed personally to assist the youth in various projects.

At its infancy, the Work Experience program formed a collaboration between Juvenile Hall's youth and staff members from the Public Works

Department to enrich the facility's playfield. The program's youth worked with Public Works staff members to lay bark, cultivated soil and plant shrubs. This collaboration aesthetically enhanced an area in the facility which is regularly used for fresh air and large muscle activities.

Shortly after the landscaping project was complete, youth began a wood working project. This project called for the building of a shed, exposing youth to carpenters, electricians and painters. Youth participated in all aspects of the build including laying the foundation concrete, forming the structure, installing insulation and roofing. Program youth have moved on to smaller projects and are currently building Adirondack chairs and jewelry boxes. As part of the program, youth receive a lot of individual time with both Officers Mendoza and Velez. The youth learn to clean and care for the tools they are utilizing, developing a true understanding of the importance of a good work ethic.

Throughout their time in the Work Experience program, youth not only gain marketable skills which are transferable to desirable employment, but these youth also grow as young men. Most youth enter the program with no tangible skills, but after a lot of patience and repetition, something clicks. Working in an environment which fosters respect, the youth connect to the projects and their Juvenile Institution Officers on a personal level. The youth are given an opportunity to think and create lasting items.

The Work Experience program pairs well with the Evidence Based treatment curriculum the youth receive in the YOTP, as they are able to use the concepts taught in a hands-on, realistic environment. For the past four years the Work Experience program has proven to be a successful project that has touched the lives of 40+ at-risk youth.



Above: Retired Juvenile Institution Officers, Carlos Mendoza and Joe Velez.



Above, Left and Below: Mr. Mendoza and Mr. Velez provide instruction & assistance for the youth in making wood working projects.



The Return of the Drought?

Remember those warm, sunny days we had in January and February? Days that in past years would have been cold, damp, and wet, as rain helped build up our water supply? Those beautiful winter days that felt like spring meant that California could be moving back in to a drought. The East Bay Times reports that as of the beginning of February, not enough rain had fallen for California to have a “normal” year for rainfall. Even though we had a wet year last year, that followed many years of drought that drained groundwater reserves.

Here are a few easy things you can do to save water (and energy) and lower your bills:

- Transform your yard with California-friendly plants. East Bay Municipal Utility District and Contra Costa Water District, the largest water suppliers in Contra Costa County, both offer rebates for replacing your lawn.
- Be mindful of the time of day you water, and consider installing an irrigation system (rebates available!).
- Cover your pool.
- Sign-up for a free home water use survey, then take advantage of rebates that help you save water and money.

You can learn more from the [Contra Costa Water District](#), the [East Bay Municipal Utility District](#), or your local water company.



owned agency that provides electricity from more renewable sources at stable, competitive rates. The County Board of Supervisors and City Councils voted last year to join MCE. With the addition of these Contra Costa communities, Contra Costa County jurisdictions are the largest group of MCE customers and voting shares on the MCE Board.

MCE determines the power source, or electric generation. PG&E will continue to deliver the electricity, maintain power lines, provide repairs and send your monthly bill. Your bill will now show separate line items for PG&E electric delivery and MCE electric generation. MCE’s generation charges replace PG&E’s generation charges; they are not an added fee.

MCE offers choices of 50% to 100% renewable energy at rates set by Board of Directors. If you live in one of the participating communities, you will start receiving information from MCE about the upcoming switch. All customers will be enrolled in MCE’s “Light Green” 50% renewable option in April, unless you choose to sign up for MCE’s Deep Green 100% renewable energy product, or opt out and remain entirely with PG&E. All County accounts in the participating cities and unincorporated County began taking service from MCE in April.

For more information, please visit <https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/mce-contracosta/> or call 1-888-632-3674.

Stay in Touch!

While the Sustainability Coordinator position is housed in the Department of Conservation and Development, the position is a resource to all County departments. Please send me your thoughts and ideas on how we can make the County healthy and safe for everyone! I can be reached at 925-674-7871, Jody.London@dcd.cccounty.us.

Los Vaqueros Reservoir During the Last Drought



Cleaner Electricity for Many Contra Costa Communities Started in April

As of April 1st, residents and businesses in Concord, Danville, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County will join the cities of Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Richmond, San Pablo, and El Cerrito in receiving electricity from MCE, a not-for-profit, community-



New Contra Costa County *Department Heads*

Anna Roth Appointed Director of the Health Services Department

After a nationwide search, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors appointed Anna Roth as the new director of Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) on January 30.

Roth has served as Chief Executive Officer of Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers for nine years and worked at CCHS for nearly 25 years. She succeeds Dr. William B. Walker, who served more than two decades as Health Services Director and over three decades as County Health Officer.

Roth took over as Health Director on February 1. Dr. Walker will stay on as Health Officer until a replacement is found for that position. Chief Nursing Officer, Jaspreet Benepal, will serve as interim CEO of CCRMC & Health Centers.

Roth holds a Master's Degree from the University of California, San Francisco, and a Master's in Public Health from Harvard University. She is a registered nurse with more than 30 years of healthcare experience and is an Institute for Healthcare Improvement Quality Improvement Fellow. Roth is a renowned leader in system redesign and innovation and a strong advocate for the inclusion of patients, families and the community as full partners in the delivery of health services.

In addition to Roth's healthcare experience, she's also held executive leadership roles locally, statewide and nationally as board member and chair of both the Essential Hospitals Institute and the California Health Care Safety Net Institute. Roth is also a lecturer at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health.

Brian Balbas Appointed Director of Public Works Department

Brian Balbas began his career with the Contra Costa County Public Works Department in July 1989 as an Entry Level Engineer. He has spent nearly 29 years serving the residents of the County in various capacities. In addition to working in all aspects of the full service Public Works Department, Brian had the opportunity to serve one year as the first City Engineer for the City of Oakley when it incorporated in 1999. He promoted within the Public Works Department to a Deputy Public Works Director in 2007, Chief Deputy in 2016 and then Director in 2018.

Brian was born and raised in San Jose, California, and left just as Silicon Valley was making a name for itself to attend Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. He received a degree in Civil Engineering in 1989 before returning to the Bay Area to begin his career.

Brian has been active in various professional organizations over the years, including American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), American Public Works Association (APWA), County Engineers Association of California (CEAC) and the regional City/County Engineers Advisory Committee (CCEAC). Brian is currently active in CEAC and served as the Chair or Vice Chair of Land Use Policy Committee for 7 years. He is also active in APWA and was the Northern California Chapter President in 2016. He believes that continuing education is important. He has taken many courses to expand his background and professional growth at local colleges and on-line courses. He recently completed the CSAC Institute Credentialed California County Senior Executive Program.

Brian is an avid Bay Area sports fan, having cheered for the 49ers and Giants for as long as he can remember. Brian loves the outdoors and his hobbies include hunting, fishing, diving, hiking and camping. The last several years he has enjoyed fishing in the Sea of Cortez in Baja and various points in Alaska, among more local trips as well.

Brian has two adult sons who make him very proud every day. He is engaged to an incredible fiancée and partner who has two daughters currently in college. They enjoy traveling together and take weekend getaways whenever possible. Camping and hiking are two of their favorite activities.





Newly Appointed

**Amalia Cunningham - Economic Development Manager,
Department of Conservation & Development**

Amalia Cunningham, AICP, is the County's new Economic Development Manager, working in the Department of Conservation and Development. Amalia has worked in redevelopment, planning, and economic development in the Bay Area for more than 15 years. She served as Economic Development Manager for the City of Benicia, and has also worked in redevelopment and economic development for the cities of Pinole, Berkeley, and San Leandro. Most recently as an independent consultant, Amalia completed an economic development strategy for the City of Albany, CA, and also consulted on projects such as broadband expansion funding and tax incentives for affordable housing. Her public policy expertise covers economic strategies and long-range plans, industrial needs assessments, community

outreach, tourism programs, assisting businesses moving through the permit process, and buying, selling, and managing publicly-owned real estate.

Amalia has written articles for professional publications, such as; *Planning* and *California Planner*. She has also served as a board member for the Municipal Management Association of Northern California (MMANC). She holds a Bachelor's Degree Cum Laude in Political Science from Amherst College, Massachusetts. She also attended the London School of Economics for one undergraduate year as part of her degree, earning a General Course Certificate in Social Policy. Amalia has a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning from the University of California at Berkeley with a concentration in Community Development, and maintains the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) credential, the professional planning certification.

Within the County's Office of Communications and Media, Contra Costa Television (CCTV) and the County's Veterans Services Office jointly won two first place Western Access Video Excellence (WAVE) Awards from the Alliance for Community Media Western Division (ACM-West) for two episodes of the program Veterans' Voices. Veterans' Voices is a live, local, call-in talk show that explores the unique challenges faced by veterans as they re-enter civilian life following active duty. This show is made possible by a grant from Cal Vet along with County staff and veteran volunteers who round-out the crew. Current and past shows can be viewed at <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/5163/Veterans-Voices>.

Congratulations to CCTV

